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WU Yi

(Phonetic: woo)
(0702/0308)

*Minister of Foreign Trade
and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC)
(since March 1993)*

Addressed as: Ms. Minister

Wu Yi, an experienced trade negotiator, is responsible for such key US-Sino bilateral issues as intellectual property rights (IPR), most-favored-nation trading status, and Chinese accession to the GATT. She gained familiarity with US positions and negotiating styles as one of Beijing's chief negotiators for IPR issues in 1991 and 1992. Wu has called publicly for China to accelerate restructuring of its economic system in order to attract increased foreign investment. She has also endorsed incentives for Taiwan investors to bring high-tech joint ventures to the mainland.

Wu is one of only three women in the State Council, China's cabinet. The daughter of intellectuals, she was born on 17 November 1938 in the industrial city of Wuhan. After graduating in 1962 from the Beijing Petroleum Institute, she became a technician in the Lanzhou Oil Refinery. She subsequently served as a technical chief and deputy chief engineer of the Beijing Dongfanghong Oil Refinery. In the mid-1980s she became deputy general manager of the Beijing Yanshan Petrochemical Corporation. Wu was party secretary of the Yanshan Petrochemical Corporation when she was elected an alternate member of the 13th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1987. She was vice mayor for industry, foreign economic relations, and trade matters in Beijing municipality during 1988-91 and repeatedly called for boosting China's trade ties to the West. According to the Hong Kong press, her success in that post led to her selection as Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, the forerunner of MOFTEC.

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The Hong Kong press describes her as hard-working and a quick study. She credits strict adherence to her motto, "be always worthy," with giving her the drive and determination to finish her 15,000-character senior engineer special thesis. In addition to her technical pursuits, she enjoys listening to classical and popular music as well as reading; the Hong Kong press reports that her favorite authors are Leo Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, and Honore de Balzac. Her other hobbies include photography, fishing, stamp collecting, and playing tennis.

Wu passed the English examination for senior engineers and won the title of senior engineer in 1988, according to Chinese press reports. She last visited the United States in 1992 as head of a Chinese delegation negotiating IPR issues. She has also traveled to Western Europe and South Korea.

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